

This listing of claims will replace all prior listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

Claim 1 (cancelled)

Claim 2 (currently amended) A process according to Claim 12 ~~Claim 1~~ wherein said representation of the coding decision comprises an information bus in which the coding decisions are represented in the same format as they are represented in the compressed bitstream which is the output of said downstream compression coding operation.

Claim 3 (previously presented) A process according to Claim 2, wherein said analysis generates information relating to picture size and type.

Claim 4 (currently amended) A process according to Claim 12 ~~Claim 1~~, wherein said analysis comprises the generation of candidate motion vectors.

Claim 5 (original) A process according to Claim 4, wherein said analysis comprises the selection for each macroblock of the picture of a motion vector from said candidate motion vectors.

Claim 6 (original) A process according to Claim 5, in which said analysis comprises the selection of a macroblock prediction mode.

Claim 7 (currently amended) A process according to Claim 12 ~~Claim 1~~ wherein said analysis includes a bit rate control and the taking of quantizer decisions appropriate to maintenance of a selected bit rate.

Claim 8 (previously presented) A process according to Claim 5 wherein plural bit rates are selected and plural quantizer decisions are taken.

Claim 9 (currently amended) Compression pre-processing apparatus, comprising a coder ~~encoding means~~ for analysing an input video signal at a picture rate and at a macroblock rate and taking compression coding decisions including picture rate coding decisions and macroblock rate coding decisions; a processor means for processing the coding decisions and an output means for outputting, from the compression pre-processing apparatus, the processed coding decisions for passage with the input video signal along a video pathway, wherein the input video signal which is passed along the video pathway with the representation of the coding decisions undergoes no processing other than delay.

Claim 10 (currently amended) Apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein said processor means for processing the coding decisions provides a representation of the coding decisions in the form of a compressed video bit stream lacking transform coefficients.

Claim 11 (cancelled)

Claim 12 (currently amended) A video signal process comprising the steps of: in a compression coding step, analyzing an input video signal at a picture rate and at a macroblock rate and taking compression coding decisions including picture rate coding decisions and macroblock rate coding decisions: forming a representation of the coding decisions: outputting said representation from the compression coding step and passing the representation along a video pathway with the input video signal; and downstream of the video pathway, compression encoding the input video signal in accordance with said coding decisions ~~A process according to Claim 1,~~ wherein the input video signal which is passed along the video pathway with the representation of the coding decisions undergoes no processing other than delay.

Claim 13 (cancelled)

Claim 14 (currently amended) A video signal process comprising the steps of: in a compression coding step, analyzing an input video signal and taking compression coding decisions including quantizer decisions; forming a representation of the coding decisions; outputting said representation from the compression coding step and passing the representation along a video pathway with the input video signal; and downstream of the video pathway compression encoding the input video signal in accordance with said coding decisions, wherein the input video signal which is passed along the video pathway with the representation of the coding decisions undergoes no compression processing.

Claim 15 (currently amended) Compression pre-processing apparatus, comprising a coder ~~encoding means~~ for analysing an input video signal and taking compression coding decisions including quantizer decisions; a processor ~~means~~ for processing the coding decisions and an output ~~means~~ for outputting, from the compression pre-processing apparatus, the processed coding decisions for passage with the input video signal along a video pathway, wherein the input video signal which is passed along the video pathway with the processed coding decisions undergoes no compression processing.

Claim 16 (cancelled)

Claim 17 (currently amended) A video signal process according to Claim 14 ~~Claim 16~~, wherein said input video signal is modified to carry said representation in one or more of the least significant bits of the input video signal.

Claim 18 (currently amended) A video signal process according to Claim 14 ~~Claim 16~~, wherein said input video signal is modified to carry said representation in a data channel of the input video signal.

Claim 19 (currently amended) A video signal process according to Claim 14 ~~Claim 16~~, wherein said input video signal is modified to carry said representation in an audio channel of the input video signal.

Claim 20 (withdrawn) A method of distributing multiple compressed bitstreams from a common input video signal, comprising the steps of taking compression coding decisions in compression coding the input video signal; forming a representation of the coding decisions; storing both said representation and the uncompressed input video signal for distribution; providing said stored representation and uncompressed input video signal to a plurality of downstream compression encoders each associated with a decoder for decoding said representation and utilising said coding decisions in compression encoding the input video signal in each of the downstream compression encoders.

Claim 21 (withdrawn) A method according to Claim 20 wherein said compression coding decisions include quantizer decisions.

Claim 22 (withdrawn) A method according to Claim 21 wherein said compression coding decisions include quantizer decisions generated at multiple bit rates.

Claim 23 (withdrawn) A method according to Claim 20 wherein said representation and uncompressed input video signal are stored for distribution on a server.

Claim 24 (withdrawn) A process according to Claim 1, wherein said analysis generates information relating to picture size and type.